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they (plurals) were wont to be formed by adding *-en*; thus *loven*, *sayen*, *complainen*. But now (whatsoever is the cause) it hath grown quite out of use, and that other so prevailed that I dare not set this foot again; albeit (to tell you my opinion) I am persuaded that the lack hereof well considered will be found a great blemish to our tongue. For seeing time and person be, as it were, the right and left hand of a verb, what can the maiming bring else, but a lameness of the whole body."

Though he writes thus strongly in favor of the old plural, Jonson himself did not fly in the face of a custom already established, even though recently, to the extent of using the *-en* plural of verbs in his plays with the freedom that other Elizabethans did. As Shakespeare in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, II. 1,

"And then the whole quire hold their hips and laugh,  
And *waxen* in their mirth,"

or Spenser, *Faery Queene*, III. 4, 15,

"Words fearen babes"—

The *Shepherd's Calendar*, May,

"Thilke same *bene* shepherdes for the Devil's stedde,  
That *playen* while theyr flockes be unfedde."

"Of other, that *caren* as little as they."

The transition from the use of the third person singular of the verb in *-th* to *-s* is interesting. In his Chapter 16, Of a Verb, Jonson notes the change. "The second and third person singular of the present are made of the first, by adding *est* and *eth*; which last is sometimes shortened into *s* or *s*," a change which he frequently illustrates in this work as well as in his plays. Speaking of *O*, "It holds up and is sharp where it ends the word or syllable," and in the same discussion, "It *varieth* the sound." His *-eth* ending is more frequent, though inconsistent, closely associated with the *s* ending. In his *Masque, Pan's Anniversary*,

"His moon now *riseth* and invites,"

and again in the *Masque of Augurs*,

"See, Heaven expecteth my return,  
The forked fire begins to burn,  
Jove beckons me to come."

Had the eighteenth century writers kept sight of Ben Jonson's *Grammar* they need not have gone astray after their possessives as they did. "The

Genitive plural is all one with the plural absolute," which Jonson writes without an apostrophe; then he adds an exception not enforced by later usage, and subjoins, "which distinction not observed brought in first the monstrous syntax of the pronoun *his* joining with a noun betokening a possessor; as the prince his house, for the prince's house." Writing on this same subject, Professor Lounsbury says, "A somewhat peculiar use of *his* to take the place of the ending of the genitive case developed itself in Old English, and prevailed somewhat extensively in the early portion of the Modern English Period. We can see it exemplified in the following passage from Shakespeare's fifty-fifth Sonnet,

'Nor Mars *his* sword nor War's quick fire shall burn,  
The living record of your memory.'

Traces of this usage can be discovered even in Anglo-Saxon. In the first text of *Layamon*, written about 1200, it occurs rarely, but is frequently found in the second text, supposed to be about fifty years later. But it was not till the sixteenth century that it began to appear often."—T. R. Lounsbury, *English Language*, p. 281.

Ben Jonson's *Grammar* is interesting then to the present age, not only for what it classifies as the practice of the time, but as in itself giving "the abstract of the time." "Little more than a rough draft," it yet furnishes an invaluable document of English as far as it was then reduced to a system, and it repays the study of the present time as the best exponent of theory and usage in combination, from the writers of Elizabethan times.

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## SCANDINAVIAN LITERATURE.

HENRIK IBSEN: *Brand*. Et Dramatisk Digt. Edited with Introduction and Notes by JULIUS E. OLSON, Professor of Scandinavian Languages and Literatures in the University of Wisconsin. Chicago: John Anderson Publishing Co., 1908. lvi + 349 pp.

Professor Julius Olson's edition of *Brand* is, in every way, a welcome publication—chiefly, per-

haps, to teachers of Norwegian: 'it is hoped,' says the editor, 'that it may also be found of assistance to the rapidly increasing number of men and women outside of academic circles who are attempting either to maintain or to acquire a knowledge of the language of Ibsen.'

By way of introduction, Olson presents an ably condensed story of Ibsen's life previous to his exile, with special reference to the experiences and works that are the necessary presuppositions for the composition of *Brand* which 'is the great central fact of Ibsen's life and authorship. . . . *Brand* would not be a great work of literature, if it could not be read and enjoyed without any knowledge of the life of the author and the particular circumstances under which it was written. . . . But in the case of *Brand*, especially, the difficulties and seeming incongruities of the poem are cleared by a knowledge of its author's struggles, and an appreciation of the whole work is correspondingly enhanced' . . . and 'All the paths of his preceding life lead to Rome, so to say, and find their culmination in *Brand*.'

Following this, we are given a critical estimate of the æsthetical value of the poem, and a conservative interpretation of its main strands of meaning. This portion of the book is a highly useful epitome, within reasonable limits, of the best in the voluminous literature that has sprung up around the poem. It is a great pity, however, that the editor had not, as I am informed, sufficient time to work into it the results of Karl Larsen's study of the recently found 'Epical Brand' which is important, by no means only to literateurs, but throws a flood of light on Ibsen's poetic methods and the (hitherto unknown) genesis of the poem. Moreover, it is to be regretted that no selections are furnished from the fragment itself (besides the weighty introductory poem 'Till de Medskyldige,' printed in the appendix); for it does contain passages of striking beauty and eloquence that have not been incorporated into the drama, though, to be sure, as a whole it is vastly inferior to the poem in its present dramatic shape.

A future edition will, undoubtedly, make good the deficiency in this respect; and also, by the way, correct the formal inelegance of quoting the sources, now in the original, now in English. A somewhat more fastidious taste might also prefer

as frontispiece Werenskjold's or Eilif Petersen's painting of the poet in his vigorous manhood to the photograph of Ibsen in his old age.

The most interesting and valuable portion of the work for the Ibsen student will, unquestionably, be the notes, furnishing a running linguistic and interpretative commentary on the more difficult passages and idioms of the text; and in them I take to lie the lasting merits of the work. In fact, one feels so grateful for having the ground broken, at last, by a competent hand, and so great and many are the difficulties, that an even more generous allotment of space than the ca. 70 pages devoted to these notes, would have been welcome.

Taking into account that the number of these notes is considerable, it is to be regretted that no reasoned index is furnished. Matters would have been helped greatly, moreover, by the introduction of a continuous numeration of lines (instead of page and line) which would facilitate comparison with other editions and the various translations. These are but minor considerations, however, that do not interfere with an appreciation of the fund of instructive material condensed in this part of the book.

As particularly helpful I shall mention the notes on 56:8; 57:7; 175:9; 243:12—which, by calling attention to ludicrous mistakes of translators, pointedly emphasize the necessity for the literary student, of constantly keeping in mind Goethe's saying:

Wer den Dichter will verstehn,  
Muss in Dichters Lande gehn.

in the sense of fully entering into the cultural atmosphere by which a work is conditioned;—furthermore, those on 28:26; 68:10; 77:19; 227:29, which are essentially acceptable, and clear up some obscure passages.

The notes on 72:12–13; 78:3–4; 157:10; and 265:13–14 are particularly valuable, as they have reference to an interesting discovery of Olson—that, in cases of doubt, the fifth and sixth edition of the poem are to be followed. As is well known, there came a decided change over Ibsen's whole external appearance and bearing, after his huge success with *Brand*. At the same time he deliberately changed his handwriting from a rather careless, unsteady cursive to the exquisite, aris-

to cratic *steil skrift* (back-hand) of his *later* mss., which thus are the final instance for all future editions. 'The ms. of *Brand*, however, . . . was found to contain many erasures and corrections. As *Brand* was the first of Ibsen's works issued by the great Gyldendal publishing house in Copenhagen, the author seems to have taken unusual pains in proof-reading. Letters to the publishers show that he called attention to misprints in the first editions. As a result, the fifth edition (1868) is free from errors. The sixth edition is an important one, for in this the orthography was changed to accord with the recommendations made at the Stockholm Congress of 1869.' Ibsen does not seem to have taken such care with the following editions. The tenth edition, already, 'contains several misprints, some of such importance as to obscure the meaning. The majority of these were carried down to later editions, even to the Memorial Edition (Minde Udgave) of 1906, the first and only Norwegian edition of Ibsen's works.'

Some few of the notes, however, will hardly be acceptable to all.

40:18. '*jøklens vold*' is scarcely to be translated 'the glacial plains'; for *vold* in the sense of 'a plain', prevailing carries the connotation of 'grassy plain, greensward' (Old Norse *vøllr*). A better reading is obtained by translating it with 'wall' (ultimately from Latin *vallum*): 'deroppe messer fos og skred / der præker vind på jøklens vold'—with the glacier as pulpit.

The element *løftning*—in the numerous compounds mentioned in the note on 110:23 has more of the meaning of '(active) inspiration, uplift' (vaekkelser, in a revivalist sense), than of 'exaltation' or 'exhilaration.'

The word *flugt* in 73:24 ('det står mig for some lys og flugt') is interpreted by the editor as 'flight (i. e., of fleeting light).' It means, however, surely, 'noble, soaring thoughts, fire,' as will be seen by comparing with 62:16; 111:17; 236:14, etc. Cf. also Dahl og Hammer, *Dansk Ordbog*, under *flugt* 4.

78:8-9 deserved a less laconic note, to clear up what Herford cautiously called a 'somewhat awkward' passage; for I entertain great doubts whether the average present-day college student remembers that 'after this lived Job an hundred and forty years'!

In this connection I may remark that I have no

great faith in Ibsen's biblical learning, constant reader of the Scriptures though he was, like Goethe. He has the 'philosophical' memory—the one that is not much concerned about details. Thus I wonder whether (210:23) '*oberst Urian*' (instead of *Uriah*, Greek *Urias*) is intended to cap the climax of the Dean's delightful exhibition of his shallow Biblical learning; or is not rather—just a little, harmless, human error of the great poet himself?—*Urian*, it is to be remembered, is a German comic quasi-surname used when one will not, or cannot, call a male person by his right name, thus also as an appellation of the devil. (Sanders Wb.)

*Et diplomatisk himmelbrev* (117:25) is decidedly not 'a diplomatic correspondence'; but must be understood as a word newly coined by the poet in analogy with *kongebrev* 'special license, dispensation,' here granted by heaven.

I was somewhat disappointed in not finding a note on 34:19 ('Se, det er dampen;—din og min'), where *dampen* for *dampere* seems to me a most questionable makeshift,<sup>1</sup> nor any suggestion how to read that metrically abominable line 250:26 ('regnbue over majvangen').

But, as was remarked above, notwithstanding a few flaws, the edition as a whole is a most creditable piece of book-making, and thoroughly to be recommended as a guide, both for the classroom and for the private study of this mighty poem. May it add to the number of the lovers and learners of Scandinavian letters!

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## THE PLAYS OF MOLIERE.

CURTIS HIDDEN PAGE: *Molière*. A new translation. Two volumes. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1908.

Dr. Curtis Hidden Page in his preface to the translation of Molière's Plays calls attention to

<sup>1</sup> I faintly remember having heard the form '*dampen*' in the lively Bergen dialect (so fond of abbreviations); but it is surely unknown elsewhere in Norway. It is not found in Fvar Aasen's nor in Ross' collections.